REMARKS

Claims 104-109, 115, and 120-135 are pending in this application, of which claims 104-109 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 115, 124, 126 and 132 are amended. Reconsideration of the application in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. THE CLAIMS ARE PATENTABLE OVER STEVENS IN VIEW OF GROSS

Claims 115, and 120-135 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,885,238 to Stevens, *et al.* (hereinafter "Stevens") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,407,434 to Gross (hereinafter "Gross"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 115 is directed to a method of repairing an aneurysm in a vessel using at least two sheath devices. The recited method comprises the steps of: introducing at least a portion of the sheath devices into the vessel; inserting a repair apparatus through a sealing cavity containing a self-sealing gel-like material disposed in at least one of the sheath devices; inserting a penetration apparatus into the repair apparatus; repairing the aneurysm in the vessel; and removing the penetration apparatus and the repair apparatus from the sheath devices and the sealing cavity.

Claim 124 is directed to a method of reducing the loss of blood from a vessel using a first sheath device in communication with a second sheath device, at least one of the first and second sheath devices comprising a sealing cavity. The recited method comprising the steps of: introducing the first sheath device into the vessel; introducing the second sheath device into the vessel; inserting at least one repair apparatus

through the sheath devices and the sealing cavity; inserting a penetration apparatus into the repair apparatus; performing a surgical procedure; and

removing the penetration apparatus and the repair apparatus from the sheath devices and the sealing cavity.

Claim 126 is directed to a method of reducing the loss of blood during the surgical repair of an aneurysm using a first sheath in communication with a second sheath device, the first and second sheath devices each comprising a housing with a first end portion, a second end portion, a hollow interior spanning from the first end to the second end portion, and a sealing cavity proximate to the second end portion of at least one of the sheath devices. The method recited in Claim 126 comprises the steps of: introducing the first end portion of the first sheath device proximate to the aneurysm through an artery; introducing the first end of the second sheath device distal to the aneurysm through the artery; inserting at least one repair apparatus through the second sheath device, the first sheath device, and the sealing cavity; inserting a visualization apparatus into the repair apparatus; repairing the aneurysm; and removing the visualization apparatus and the repair apparatus from the second and first sheath devices and the sealing cavity.

Claim 132 is directed to an introducer sheath system for use during a surgical procedure. The system recited in Claim 132 comprises: at least two introducer sheath devices, the introducer sheath devices each comprise a housing having a passageway accommodating at least one surgical component, a penetration apparatus, and a visualization apparatus therein; a sealing cavity in communication with the housing of at least one sheath device, the sealing cavity containing a biocompatible self-sealing

material forming a seal around the surgical components as the components are inserted and removed through the sealing cavity. Support for the amendments may be found at least in paragraphs [0040] – [0045], [0074], [0105], [0113], [0119] – [0130], [0164], and [0168] of the present application. The remaining claims pending in the application depend from either Claims 115, 124, 126, or 132 and include at least all the limitations recited therein.

Taken alone or in combination, neither Stevens nor Gross teach the claimed subject matter of the present invention. Although Stevens is directed generally to devices and methods for performing cardiovascular procedures, Stevens does not teach a method of repairing an aneurysm in a vessel or a method of reducing the loss of blood from a vessel as recited in the present claims. Moreover, Stevens does not teach providing a device having a sealing cavity, inserting a repair apparatus through the sealing cavity, and inserting either a penetration apparatus, a visualization apparatus, both, or a penetration apparatus and visualization apparatus combined in a single assembly into the repair apparatus. The disclosed device does not teach a sealing cavity and the insertion of a repair apparatus further comprising the insertion of a penetration apparatus or a visualization apparatus, or both, into the repair apparatus and thus through the sealing cavity, as presently claimed.

Further, Gross does not teach the subject matter of the present invention. Gross suggests only a single thoracentesis device **10** that includes "an elongated flexible catheter **14** having a leading end **16** formed with one or more radial ports or openings **18** which allow for fluid or air communication with the body cavity to which the leading end is inserted" and its method of use. See Gross, Col. 2, ll. 42-47; Col. 5, ll. 10-31.

Gross is completely silent, however, to a method of repairing an aneurysm in a vessel or a method of reducing the loss of blood from a vessel as recited in the present claims. Moreover, Gross does not teach providing a device having a sealing cavity, and inserting either a penetration apparatus, a visualization apparatus, both, or a penetration apparatus and visualization apparatus combined in a single assembly into the repair apparatus and inserting a repair apparatus through the sealing cavity.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Stevens and Gross, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose, teach or suggest the invention claimed by Applicants. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

II. CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims of the present invention define subject matter patentable over the references cited by the Office and that the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Office believe that anything further is desirable to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Office is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the below listed telephone number.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to deposit account number 03-2469. Moreover, if the deposit account contains insufficient funds, the Commissioner is hereby invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative to arrange payment.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:

JOHN N. COULBY, Reg. No. 43,565
Kelley Drye and Warren LLP
3050 K Street, N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20007
(202) 342-8400